

The Old Country School Bus

Based on a true story, as told by a man named Eddy from Houghton County, MI.

“Around 1922, the old school bus was making its way down the snow-covered road, picking up the children. I was 6 years old. My older sister and I boarded the bus along with the other kids. It was the first snow of the year, so the snow runners had not been put on the bus. The old potbelly stove aboard sure felt good.

After a few miles down the road, the horses began to act up, and began to run to the point the driver could not control them. The driver said, “It must be a bear they smell!” What followed were a few choice words and some chilling moments. When he finally got the horses to stop, the reins were tangled, and the harness was broken. The driver stepped outside to make repairs, but unfortunately the horses were still spooked! Before the driver could get control of the horses, they took off at a full gallop.

By this time, the kids were panicking, and the driver was screaming for them to jump out! The bus was full of kids and my sister and I were the last two left inside. I was just too small to jump out, so my sister put me on the bottom step and told me, “Jump! I’ll be right behind you!”

I did make it, but when I landed, my lunch bucket must have hit me in the head, because I was knocked out cold. Most of the kids just had small cuts and minor bruises. My sister had a broken collarbone. We were taken to a neighbor’s home and cared for until later that day. It took about two days for me to fully recover.

Soon we were back to normal and riding the old school bus. We had nothing that even came close to that much excitement ever again. Just the same, after that day, I would always take a seat by the door...just in case!”

This story is written and retold by artist, Curtis Elmore, as the inspiration for The Old County School Bus painting.